

# In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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## Message from the Mayor

Earlier this week, I asked the members of the DC Council to interrupt their summer recess to address the disturbing increase in crime that has occurred over the past month.

The District of Columbia remains a safe place for residents and tourists. Over the past eight years, we have worked diligently together to reduce crime in the city, and we have been successful so far, with crime reaching an all-time low last year. We have made it a priority to stay ahead of the curve with regard to juvenile violence and crime. This has been a tremendous challenge, but one that we take seriously. And by no means is our work done. We continue to focus on accelerating our youth development strategy, which is aimed at steering our youth toward productive and healthy outcomes. And we are committed to strengthening accountability for juvenile offenders, particularly those who commit serious or violent crimes.

The past 30 days have presented a set of challenges that we must address now. Based on updated numbers, this period has shown a 9 percent increase in robberies and a 21 percent increase in assaults with a deadly weapon.

Even more sobering has been the 15 homicides that have taken place across the city since the beginning of July, following an 8 percent increase in violent crime overall since the beginning of the year.

A particularly troubling aspect of what we are seeing is that juveniles are involved in an increasing percentage of these violent crimes. This year, we've seen a 14 percent increase in the number of juveniles arrested. And the types of crime we are arresting them for are the more violent ones. The number of juveniles arrested for robbery has shot up 82 percent, while the number of juveniles arrested for weapons charges has increased 27 percent.

While most of the District's youth are enjoying a fun and productive summer, an increasing number are robbing people and using guns. It goes without saying that this is a disturbing and unacceptable trend.

MPD Chief Ramsey made the decision on July 11 to declare a "crime emergency" to free up his ability to effectively deploy police officers in areas of high crime and to increase police visibility in our neighborhoods. Through these efforts, the Chief and I want to see violent crime reduced by half over the next 30 days.

MPD cannot do this job alone. Last week, the Chief convened a meeting with city and federal agencies to enlist their support in reaching this goal.

I greatly appreciate the efforts of Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, Congressman Frank Wolf and the US Attorney Ken Wainstein in addressing our city's crime emergency. As a follow-up to the Chief's meeting, a coalition of federal and local law enforcement agencies has formed a new Violent Crime Task Force led by the MPD, the US Attorney's Office and the FBI's Washington Field Office to focus on reducing violent crimes and robberies in the District and to supplement existing violent crime reduction strategies. The task force will be supported by a larger coalition of District and federal law enforcement agencies, including the Metro Transit Police, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the US Capitol Police, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the US Marshals Services, the US Park Police and the US Secret Service.

In addition, we will immediately implement the new measures in the Omnibus Public Safety Emergency Act passed by the Council to help combat gang activity, weapons possession and use, crimes against minors, and assaults.

The legislation I asked the Council to consider on an emergency basis contained four key measures. First, the bill provides the Mayor with the authority to modify curfew hours in certain circumstances, where it is important to help get minors off the streets and out of harm's way. Second, the bill mandates that certain information about juvenile offenders be shared with MPD. This measure covers only those juveniles who have committed serious crimes, including unauthorized use of a vehicle, a crime of violence, a weapons offense, or have been arrested three or more times. Access to this information can provide police with a more complete understanding of the neighborhoods they are charged with protecting. Third, the bill authorizes the expansion of the closed circuit television camera project to be used for crime prevention and investigation. Finally, I requested \$8 million to pay for MPD overtime that will effectively put 300 additional officers on the streets for the next six weeks. This action will put these officers on the streets immediately. To support the police, I am also requesting \$1 million to cover overtime costs of other agencies that will be increasing their capacity during this time.

Government can't do this alone, however. We also need the community to be involved in our efforts. Police-community partnerships will be in the spotlight on Tuesday, August 1, as residents from across the District of Columbia join with their neighbors, police officers and other public officials in celebrating the 23rd annual National Night Out against crime.

Police and residents in all seven police districts will be holding block parties, neighborhood walks, community vigils, cookouts, softball games and other crime prevention events – all designed to show their solidarity against crime and their commitment to working together for safer neighborhoods, especially during the District's current crime emergency.

A list of National Night Out activities in the District can be found on the Police Department's website, [mpdc.dc.gov/nno](http://mpdc.dc.gov/nno). Residents may also call the MPDC's Community Outreach Section (202) 727-0783 for information about activities in their neighborhood.



Residents who are unable to participate in organized National Night Out activities are still encouraged to turn on exterior lights and spend some time outside on the evening of August 1, as a show of solidarity against crime and in support of neighborhood safety.



## AGENCY WEBSITES

Department of Human  
Services

Office of Tax and  
Revenue

Department of Parks and  
Recreation

Department of  
Employment Services

Metropolitan Police  
Department

Office of Boards and  
Commissions

Commission on the Arts  
and Humanities

## LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Hands on DC

DC Convention and  
Tourism

DC Public Library

# MPD's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit Wins Prestigious "Innovations in American Government" Award

Officials at Harvard University's Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation announced that for reaching out to an underserved community and creating a model for community policing, the DC Metropolitan Police Department's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit has been awarded its prestigious "Innovations in American Government Award."

The Innovations in American Government Award is a Program of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and is administered in partnership with the Council of Excellence in Government. Out of 1,000 well qualified applicants only seven programs were selected.

MPD's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit is a model of collaboration and teamwork. The unit regularly works with other police units to deal with crimes committed by and against the Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transgender (GLBT) communities. GLBT and allied volunteers help establish the unit's priorities and functions and educate officers about the culture of the community and its needs.

I want to congratulate MPD's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit on winning this award. I couldn't be more proud of the work that they do. Other cities around the county will benefit from the groundbreaking efforts of the men and women who have established this exemplary model of community policing which serves to protect a traditionally marginalized community as well as the public at large.

For more information on the innovations in American Government program and this year's award winners, please visit [ashinstitute.harvard.edu](http://ashinstitute.harvard.edu) or [excelgov.org](http://excelgov.org).

## Lamond Recreation Center Is First-Ever DC Government Green Building

Last week, I endorsed legislation that would foster the construction of additional green buildings in the District. I'd like the city to become a national leader in the trend toward green buildings, which often rely on recycled materials, use low energy and are generally built with an eye towards minimizing the impact on the environment.

The District's record on green buildings is already ahead of most local governments in the Washington area and the city has plans for additional green buildings like the Anacostia Gateway, the Department of Employment Services office and recreation centers in several wards.

This is an important initiative and I'm proud of our city's record so far on the green building effort. We can and we will do more and I look forward to the Council reviewing our legislation in the fall with a goal of enacting it into law as quickly as possible. This effort will help not only the environment but also the health of District residents, by reducing ambient temperatures and cutting the combined sewer overflow by better managing storm water runoff during heavy rains. There is little doubt that global warming is a very real and very ominous threat; every effort we can make to reverse the warming trends will benefit generations to come.

The District's biggest accomplishment to date is the Lamond Recreation Center on Tuckerman Street in Ward 4, which has several "green" features, including solar-water heaters that warm all of the water used in the building and a bio-filtration pond that filters storm water runoff before it joins the natural watershed on its way to the Potomac River. Additional green recreation centers are planned for Columbia Heights, Trinidad and Glover Park.

Among the green features at Lamond:

- Roof - high reflectivity, light colored roofing reduces heat island effects.
- Mechanical Systems - use 30 percent less energy than conventional buildings.
- Solar Hot Water Heaters - use solar energy to provide 100 percent of hot water for the building.
- Finishes and Flooring - sheet linoleum flooring is made from natural, renewable materials and does not contain dangerous chemicals. Counters and millwork are made from recycled material.
- Recycling - dedicated recycling station provided.
- Landscaping - all landscaping are native species that do not require irrigation.
- Material - 20 percent of the building material was manufactured locally.

Besides Lamond, the new National Association of Realtors Headquarters on New Jersey Avenue is also a green building.



BRC Alerts

DCLMPC Partnership  
Works!

DCOA Spotlight on Aging

DHS Outreach

DISB DC Financial  
Gateway Express

OAG Inter Alia...

OAPIA Updates

OPGD Grant Funding  
Alerts

# Mayor's Critical Initiatives Approved by Council

In their final session before summer vacation, the DC Council acted favorably on numerous important initiatives I initiated, including the comprehensive anti-crime bill, the disposition of land around South Capitol Street where the new baseball stadium is being built, the Northwest One/Sursum Corda plan, and a favorable first vote on the retirement package for MPD Chief Charles Ramsey.

Following are some highlights of my legislative accomplishments that were approved by the Council:

- Action was completed on amendments to the 2004 ballpark legislation in order to ensure that the city could issue the bonds needed to finance the ballpark construction.
- The Council approved legislation jointly developed by my Administration and Councilmember Carol Schwartz to create a District Department of Environment, whose sole mission is to enforce the laws designed to protect the city's air, land, and water from contamination.
- The lease between the District and the Washington Nationals was approved -- this will allow the development of the ballpark to move forward.
- My Way to Work bill was approved -- it establishes a living wage of \$11.75/hour for employees of District-assisted organizations. The legislation also creates a job opportunity bank to help resident's access job training, and it strengthens enforcement of requirements to hire District residents first.
- The Council approved a financing proposal that allows the city to finance more than \$200 million needed to build a new Saint Elizabeths mental hospital.
- I included \$100 million in my Fiscal Year 2007 budget and financial plan for the first year's installment of a ten-year proposal to modernize school facilities. This was approved by Council with the overall budget.
- My legislation was approved to allow the District to issue up to \$187 million in bonds to finance and build a new headquarters hotel in partnership with Marriott International adjacent to the Washington Convention Center.
- The Council also approved my proposal allowing the District to raise up to \$230 million in order to help finance key infrastructure and community investments associated with the broader development of the Southeast Federal Center project.
- The Council voted to support the South Capitol Street disposition and development proposal that will ensure that a dynamic and vibrant district is developed north of the ballpark and that parking can be accommodated partially underground, rather than in stand-alone structures.
- The Council also approved my Omnibus Public Safety Act providing new penalties to assist police and city prosecutors in fighting crime in the city, particularly violent crimes perpetrated against our most vulnerable citizens. While the bill will go through a third reading in the fall, an emergency version was passed to allow the city to take advantage of the bill's enhanced protections for residents.
- As mentioned above, the Northwest One/Sursum Corda Plan, which was developed in collaboration with community residents, to build more than 1,000 units of affordable housing and provide needed investments in public facilities and human services.
- Additionally, the Council approved the disposition of a third surplus school property, Keene School, for use by charter schools and for other community uses; Bruce School and Old Congress Heights School were approved in the spring.
- Finally, the Council took a favorable first vote to fulfill a commitment that the city made to MPD Chief Ramsey, in exchange for his leaving his post in Chicago to become Chief of Police in the District. His long tenure and performance in the city underscores my opinion that he has earned every penny of his pension. Final approval should take place this fall.

## Improvements to Home Purchase Assistance Program

Last week, I announced improvements to the regulations for the Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP) which will allow the city to better meet the needs of low-to-moderate income residents who seek to become first-time homebuyers. At the announcement, I was joined by Frederick Jack who received almost \$20,000 in assistance from the city when he purchased his home on Euclid Street, NW in 2004.

I am proud of the help our city gives to people as they prepare to buy their first home in the District. Since 1985, we have helped nearly 8,000 low and moderate income individuals and families with more than \$124 million in assistance. Now that our city's economy is flourishing, I am even more confident that we can amend the program so that it is even more helpful for future homeowners.

This assistance program provides down payment and closing cost assistance to qualified low-to-moderate income District residents who are first-time homebuyers in the District. Under the new regulations, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will be able to adjust assistance levels yearly, based on current market trends. This year, qualified low-income applicants can receive up to \$70,000 in assistance. The minimum required contribution from HPAP homebuyers will also be reduced. The changes also include additional modifications that will aid residents in finding and affording a home in the District. All changes became effective on June 30, 2006.

The Home Purchase Assistance Program will be critical and instrumental in helping District citizens reach their dream of homeownership. I am excited about the changes made to the program because now it is even more accessible to more homebuyers in our city. For more information on programs to assist homebuyers, visit [dhcd.dc.gov](http://dhcd.dc.gov).



## District Activities



Mayor Williams meets with Governors Kaine and Ehrlich to address National Capital Region issues.



Mayor Williams delivers remarks at the Annual Sister Cities International Conference. Delegates from more than 39 countries attended.



Mayor Williams delivers remarks at the 97th Annual NAACP National Convention.



Mayor Williams signs a Sister City Agreement with Sunderland, England, at the British Embassy in Washington, DC.

## Community News

- [Office on Latino Affairs Offers Literacy, Education Grant Opportunities](#)
- [Mayor Welcomes First Fringe Festival to Downtown DC](#)
- [On National Ride to Work Day, Mayor Thanks District Residents and Workers Who Commute on a Motorcycle](#)

## Upcoming Events

[View All](#) [News Releases](#)

**8/1**    **National Night Out 2006**  
5 pm — 8 pm  
Turkey Thicket Recreation Center  
Michigan Avenue and Quincy Street, NE  
1100 Michigan Avenue, NE

